

Previous to this time there has been a gathering of the members in and about the church, where old friends greeted each other and new acquaintances were made. A kind, friendly, Christian spirit permeated them all and many were the happy greetings and the pleasant reminiscences of past associations. Mingled with it all were many good and interesting stories told, which brought smiles and laughter from the hearers.

When, however, the members of the Assembly and others gathered in the church, it was evident that they had but one thought: that was to hear the moderator's sermon and receive the message from God's word which he had for them. The moderator, Rev. Dr. C. W. Grafton, announced that the purpose of his sermon was that all who heard him might be brought a little nearer to Jesus and to feel all through the meeting of the Assembly that He was with them and was guiding them individually and as a body. The sermon was listened to with intense interest and the closest attention. We are fortunate in being able to give it to our readers in full on another page of this issue.

Rev. Dr. C. R. Hemphill, president of Louisville Seminary, and Rev. Dr. Thornton Whaling, president of Columbia Seminary, assisted Dr. Grafton in the services accompanying the sermon.

Following the sermon the Lord's supper was celebrated, conducted by Dr. Grafton, the closing prayer being made by Rev. Dr. A. B. Currie.

During the recess the ladies of the church served a delightful lunch in the Sunday-school room.

At the afternoon session the roll of the Assembly was read by the stated clerk, Rev. Dr. T. H. Law, and the Assembly was formally constituted with prayer by the moderator. When nominations for moderator were called for, Ruling Elder C. S. McDowell, of Eufaula, Ala., nominated Rev. Dr. Thornton Whaling, president of Columbia Seminary. Ruling Elder Professor William Dinwiddie nominated Rev. Dr. A. B. Currie, of Nashville, Tenn. Rev. A. A. Wallace, of Mexico, Mo., nominated Rev. Dr. W. R. Dobyns, of St. Joseph, Mo. Rev. Dr. E. R. Leyburn, of Durham, N. C., nominated Rev. Dr. J. M. Wells, of Wilmington, N. C.

At the request of the moderator, Rev. J. G. Venable led the Assembly in prayer that it might be guided in the selection of the new moderator.

On the first ballot the vote was Whaling, 50; Currie, 52; Dobyns, 35; Wells, 85. In accordance with a motion adopted before the vote was taken, Dr. Dobyns' name was dropped, as he received the lowest vote.

On the second vote Dr. Whaling received 59 votes; Dr. Currie, 67; Dr. Wells, 105. Dr. Whaling's name was dropped.

On the third vote Dr. Currie received 99 votes and Dr. Wells received 129.

On motion, the vote for Dr. Wells was made unanimous by a rising vote.

The moderator asked Ruling Elder Hon. Calvin Wells, the brother of the newly-elected moderator, to escort him to the moderator's chair, and he was greeted by the whole Assembly rising to its feet.

Mr. J. W. McCain, of Mecklenburg Presbytery, presented the Assembly with a gavel for the use of the moderator. In presenting this gavel Mr. McCain said:

Mr. Moderator and Christian Friends assembled here:

Near Waxhaw, my home town, on the National Highway just over in North Carolina, stands a monument erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution, in honor of the birthplace of Andrew Jackson, seventh President of the United States, and

this gavel which I now have the honor and pleasure of presenting to you in the name of Mecklenburg Presbytery is supremely entitled to be called a "Jacksonian gavel."

First, because the trees from which this gavel was made grew near the spot where Andrew Jackson was born.

Second, because persimmon, hickory and cedar form its constituent parts, and these trees are typical of President Jackson's career.

The persimmon wood, which forms the head of this little instrument of authority, reminds us that a persimmon in its green stage is sure to render uncomfortable anyone who trifles with it. So Andrew Jackson in the green stage of his life always brought discomfort to anyone who dared to trifle with him; and like the persimmon in its ripe age, Andrew Jackson in the ripeness of his latter years acquired a pleasantness and suavity very delightful to those who had social relations with him. Then, too, the persimmon is the most Democratic of all the trees that wave in the forest, offering its fruits freely to the rich and the poor, high and low alike, and herein we have another most striking likeness to the most democratic of all the Presidents.

It is hardly necessary for me to call the attention of this intelligent audience to the similarity that exists between the qualities of the hickory, the handle of this gavel, and the character of Andrew Jackson, for history has forever put her seal on that, and until time shall be no more the name "Old Hickory," emblem of strength, courage and firmness, will ever be a household word throughout this fair Southland of ours, and will echo and re-echo aloud down through the corridors of time in answer to every utterance of the name of Andrew Jackson.

The third and last wood mentioned in the formation of this gavel is cedar. Cedar has been celebrated from the most ancient times for its beauty, magnificence and longevity, as well as for the excellence and durability of its timber. It is often mentioned in the Scriptures, it supplied the wood-work in Solomon's Temple; and in the poetry of the Old Testament it is a frequent emblem of prosperity, strength and stability; and as this cedar penetrates the handle of this gavel, so did the love of country for liberty and freedom penetrate the great heart of "Old Hickory," which caused him to stand as immovable as the rocks of Gibraltar in the principles that he conceived to be right.

But aside from the woods which so appropriately form this gavel, the very instrument itself, in its resemblance to the mallet or hammer, should immediately call to our minds the hammering that Jackson administered to the British at New Orleans, or his smashing of the United States Bank, which he believed to be a dangerous institution to a republic such as ours.

His hammering down of the nullification doctrine of our South Carolina neighbors in 1832 is another case in point, but is likely to be better remembered by them than by us, and I simply mention it in passing.

All through his public career Andrew Jackson never failed to bring his gavel down hard on every principle he conceived to be wrong.

And now, Mr. Moderator, as "Old Hickory" was successful in commanding his armies, and guiding safely the "old ship of state" into the harbors of safety, I therefore pray that you may be successful in wielding this "Jacksonian gavel" over this the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church that all may join heartily and make this the best session in its history.

I present it with all its historic significance and that it may be dedicated for the purpose intended in the Master's service as the property of the Assembly, is my earnest prayer.

The inscription on the gavel is:

"Jacksonian Gavel

Presented to

Southern General Assembly

Birmingham, Ala.,

By Mecklenburg Presbytery.

5-17-17

J. W. M., Rep.

The reports of the Executive Committees were presented and distributed. One of the striking facts about these reports is the spirit of optimism shown in each of them, and another is the excellent results which

have been accomplished by the work done by these committees.

Rev. Dr. Walter L. Lingle, chairman of a committee appointed by the last Assembly, presented the following report, which will be discussed at a later time:

#### Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Oglethorpe University.

This committee was created and given instructions under the following resolution, which was passed by the General Assembly in session at Orlando, Fla., in May, 1916:

"After a conference with certain members of the Board of Directors of Oglethorpe University, and certain members of the Committee of Education and the Advisory Committee of Education and other brethren interested, it was agreed by them to ask this Assembly to appoint an ad interim committee of five, three ministers and two elders, to confer with a like committee from the Board of Directors of Oglethorpe University to see if it is possible to come to some agreement as to the relationship of Oglethorpe University to the Presbyterian Church in the United States which would be satisfactory to all parties concerned and report to the next Assembly. It was also agreed to ask the Assembly to appoint the following as that committee: Revs. Walter L. Lingle, D. D., Robert F. Campbell, D. D., C. W. Grafton, D. D., Elders Helm Bruce and John S. Munce." (See Minutes 1916, p. 18.)

In compliance with the instructions given in this resolution, your ad interim committee held a series of conferences with a similar committee from the Board of Directors of Oglethorpe University, in the city of Atlanta, on February 13 and 14, 1917. All the members of our committee were present except Dr. Grafton, who was detained at the last moment.

First, guided by the Oglethorpe committee, we inspected the grounds and buildings and material equipment of Oglethorpe University.

We found a site consisting of forty-eight and one-sixth acres of land, to which Oglethorpe will have a fee simple title after it has been used for twenty years for educational, religious or benevolent purposes. There is no special natural beauty about the site, but we believe that it will make an adequate and satisfactory campus when it has been properly graded and beautified. This tract of land is located north of Atlanta on the main line of the Southern Railway at Crosskeys station, which the Southern Railway time table says is ten and eight-tenths miles from the Terminal (Southern) Station in Atlanta. It is above five or six miles out side of the city limits of Atlanta. A trolley car line at present goes within a mile of the University and promises to go to the gate of the grounds in the near future. Only one building has been erected. It is an unusually substantial and handsome building, and elegant in all of its appointments. It is built of stone and is fireproof throughout. We understand that it cost about \$175,000. This building includes dormitories for students, classrooms, administrative offices, dining-room and kitchen. We had the pleasure of meeting the professors and students and of looking in a general way into the courses of study. About sixty students have been in attendance during the past year. These are all in the freshman class, and are doing about the same grade of work that is in the freshman class in the average college. It cannot be said that Oglethorpe is now doing any real university work, but the Board of Directors say they are looking forward to the establishment of post-graduate and university work when conditions make it possible.

Your committee also made a careful study of the charter of Oglethorpe and the by-laws of the Board of Directors. A full, up-to-date statement concerning the financial affairs of Oglethorpe was made to your ad interim committee and the report of a reliable expert accountant was laid before us, showing clearly the assets and liabilities and expenditures of the institution to date. We have a copy of these statements, and are prepared to give such information along these lines as may be pertinent to the discussion of the subject in hand.

Having put ourselves in possession of all the information that seemed necessary, we settled down to the conference, which the last Assembly directed us to hold in the resolution quoted above. We would like for the members of this Assembly to study

carefully the specific scope of the instructions given us in that resolution before looking at our findings.

It has been rather difficult for us to interpret this resolution and to discover precisely what the Assembly wanted us to do. Your committee, knowing something of the history of the resolution, was under the impression that the Assembly expected us to take up some of the larger questions connected with this subject, such as: Does our Church need a university? Can our Church afford a university and at the same time support adequately the great missionary, educational and benevolent enterprises which she already has? Does our Church really want a university? Does our Church want a university fashioned after the plan and ideals of Oglethorpe University? We believe that such fundamental questions as these must be considered in any adequate and satisfactory discussion of the subject now before us.

On the other hand, our brethren on the Oglethorpe Committee insisted on a strictly literal interpretation of the Assembly's resolution quoted above and firmly declined to discuss with us any of these larger questions which we have mentioned. It can be seen that their interpretation excludes these larger questions. Upon this insistence of the Oglethorpe Committee, we limited our discussions with them and have limited our findings to the narrower interpretation, and have simply tried to reach an "agreement as to the relationship of Oglethorpe University to the Presbyterian Church, U. S., which would be satisfactory to all parties concerned."

An additional reason for yielding to the strictly literal interpretation is the fact that so recent an Assembly as that of 1912 (see Minutes, p. 124) had passed upon some of these questions which we have mentioned and at the same time had definitely instructed the Executive Committee of Christian Education and Ministerial Relief "to study the whole field in a scientific and systematic way and to report to a later Assembly whether there is any real need of a great Presbyterian university." We take it for granted that the Executive Committee of Christian Education is still working under these instructions.

It is not quite clear who constitute the "all parties concerned" in the resolution. There were three parties represented in the conference which prepared and presented to the last Assembly the resolution under which our committee is working. These three parties were the Board of Directors of Oglethorpe University, the General Assembly's Executive Committee of Christian Education, and the General Assembly's Permanent Advisory Committee on Christian Education. We understand that the Assembly has given us the task of finding a "relationship" which will be satisfactory to all three of these parties. Another party mentioned in the resolution is the Presbyterian Church in the United States. We understand that it is also a large part of our task to find a "relationship" which will be satisfactory to the entire Presbyterian Church in the United States.

It is comparatively easy to learn what is satisfactory to the Board of Directors of Oglethorpe University and what is satisfactory to the Assembly's Executive and Advisory Committees of Christian Education. It is much more difficult to discover what will be satisfactory to the entire Presbyterian Church in the United States.

As we study the recent actions of Assemblies, Synods, Presbyteries and of the Assembly's Executive and Advisory Committees of Christian Education, we are convinced that the Presbyterian Church in the United States believes that educational institutions, built by the Church's money and using the Church's name and influence, should be owned by the Church and governed by trustees appointed by the proper courts of the Church.

On the other hand, as we study the charter and by-laws of Oglethorpe University, and the history of Oglethorpe movement, we are convinced that those in charge of the Oglethorpe movement believe that their institution should be owned and controlled by a self-perpetuating board, independent of all Church courts, or that the very minimum of authority, if any, should be given to Church courts. We also realize that it would be rather difficult for Oglethorpe to recede from this view, as it has been written into the warp and woof of her charter and as the subscriptions which were made

(Continued on page 8.)